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The Indonesia Human Rights Campaign
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Honorary President: Lord Avebury; Honorary Treasurer: Tom Soper; Organising Secretary: Carmel Budiardjo

President Sam Nujoma,
State House,
Private Bag 13339,
Windhoek, Namibia

4 April 1990

Dear Mr President,

We would like first to congratulate you and the people of Namibia on the occasion of Namibia's newly-won independence.

We represent groups in all parts of the world who campaign in solidarity with the people of East Timor, the country which was invaded and annexed by Indonesia more than fourteen years ago. Besides trampling on the right of the East Timorese people to self-determination, the war waged by Indonesia has contributed directly or indirectly to the death of some 200,000 East Timorese, one-third of the population. Torture, extra-judicial killings, disappearances and fear continue to be the daily experience of people in East Timor. Indonesia has plundered East Timor's natural resources, destroyed its traditional way of life, and is trying to eradicate the Timorese identity by indoctrinating the younger generation in Indonesian-run schools and by means of population control through an externally-imposed and highly unpopular family planning programme.

Like your people, the people of East Timor have been subjected to rule by a foreign power, first Portugal and now Indonesia. Like your people, they have been robbed of their natural resources and have experienced racial discrimination. But whereas Namibia is now independent, East Timor still suffers from foreign occupation. And whereas your people have enjoyed international recognition and support, the people of East Timor are isolated from the outside world and have waged an armed struggle since 1975 with no material assistance from abroad.

Although Indonesia was once a Dutch colony and was a founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement, it is now a ruthless colonial power which enjoys the support of the Western powers. Very few non-aligned countries see Indonesia as an aggressive power, guilty of violating the very principles upon which the Non-Aligned Movement was founded.

We know that international political relations are complex and that, by and large, most states prefer to base their foreign policies on 'realism'. There was a time when most countries outside Africa favoured a 'realistic' policy towards South Africa, believing that apartheid and colonialism could never change. This is the attitude of many countries towards Indonesia, one of the richest countries in the world in natural resources.

The number of countries that support East Timor today is quite small; they include the five former Portuguese colonies in Africa which have, since their own independence, consistently backed East Timor. As the former colonial power which failed to complete the decolonisation process in East Timor in 1975,

Portugal is now trying to compensate for this by seeking to rally international backing for East Timor. Portugal is still recognised by the UN as the administering power and is committed under its Constitution to supporting East Timor's right to self-determination. But East Timor needs far more international support if it is to bring pressure to bear on Indonesia to negotiate for the withdrawal of its troops, paving the way to self-determination in accordance with the UN Charter.

As a country that has been through the same experience that East Timor still suffers, Namibia would be an important source of support for East Timor, morally as well as diplomatically. East Timor is still on the agenda of the UN Decolonisation Committee which provides our organisations with a forum to petition in favour of its self-determination. We firmly believe that Namibia, having itself, until recently, been on the Decolonisation Committee's agenda, will be better able than most to sympathise with East Timor's plight.

In 1982, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 37/30 calling on the UN Secretary General to hold consultations with all the parties directly concerned, to bring about a peaceful solution in East Timor. This resolution means that the UN Secretary General should include the people of East Timor in the consultations; but as yet, only Portugal and Indonesia have been consulted. In February 1989, Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, the Apostolic Administrator of Dili, wrote to Mr Peres de Cuellar asking that a referendum be conducted in East Timor under UN auspices. Bishop Belo's proposal has since been supported by Xanana Gusmao, leader of the East Timorese resistance movement, and by the East Timor National Convergence which is composed of the two East Timorese parties, Fretilin and UDT. Although more than a year has elapsed, Mr de Cuellar has not yet responded to Bishop Belo's plea.

At a time when world events are moving fast, we hope that you, as the President of the newly independent Namibia, will express solidarity with the people of East Timor who are now struggling for the objectives that you have just won. We believe that your support would carry weight throughout Africa and internationally, helping to persuade other countries, particularly in the Non-ligned Movement, to be more sensitive to the issue.

With our deepest respect and admiration.

Yours sincerely,

Carmel Budiardjo,
TAPOL, Indonesia Human Rights Campaign

Co-signed by:

Australia Australia-East Timor Association
Hobart East Timor Committee
Christians in Solidarity with East Timor

Belgium: Rui Gomes, Christian Movement for Peace International

Canada:	East Timor Alert Network, Ladysmith Rights On! Ottawa Nova Scotia East Timor Group
Denmark:	Teresa Aparicio, International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs
France:	Bruno Kahn, Agir Pour Timor
Germany:	Association for Endangered Peoples IMBAS, Human Rights Group for ASEAN countries
Indonesia:	Jusfiq Hadjar, Movement for Basic Human Rights (Netherlands)
Japan:	Alouisius Soma, Bishop of Nagoya, President of the Japanese Council for Justice and Peace
	Free East Timor Japan Coalition: Yoichiro Tsutsut, Zentsuji Group Masamichi Kijima, Tokyo Group Naoko Takahashi, Sapporo Group Masato Hagura, Sendai Group Takahiro Tsutsumoto, Kure Group Mitsuyoshi Matsuo, Okayama Group Mikio Monju, Osaka Group Hiromu Itotsuchi, Nagoya Group
Netherlands:	Liem Soei Liong, Dutch Indonesia Committee Chris Huinder, X minus Y
Portugal:	Luisa T.-Pereira, Commission for the Rights of the Maubere People Jean-Pierre Catry, Peace is Possible in East Timor Antonio Barbedo, Peace and Justice for East Timor, Oporto
Sweden:	Jan-Eric Forsberg, Swedish East Timor Committee and Institute of Asian Studies
United Kingdom;	Mark Roberts, Christian Movement for Peace